

Zeitschrift:	The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber:	Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band:	- (1968)
Heft:	1550
Rubrik:	City Swiss Club

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WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE DONE WITHOUT THEM?

The City Swiss Club
invite the Ladies to a Riverside Dinner Dance by Candle-light

There are not many Clubs in the Swiss community in this country, which bar women from membership. Apart from such obviously masculine organisations as the Y.M.C.A. and the Swiss Rifle Association, it is now only the City Swiss Club that will not accept women members. For whilst the Swiss Economic Council is at the moment composed of men only, there are, to my knowledge, no rules barring ladies, provided they had the right qualifications.

Why then, one is frequently asked, does the City Swiss Club remain a strictly male fraternity? The fact that federal suffrage for women has not (yet) been granted in Switzerland is surely no reason why women should be considered incapable of appreciating an interesting talk. And after all, women, too, can be quite good card players! The die-hards, of course, raise their arms in alarm — "What, poison the Club atmosphere by admitting women?" and here I hasten to add that I have no desire to join yet another Club and pay more membership fees and then be compelled to make even more write-ups of meetings. Above all, I have absolutely no wish whatsoever to deprive the strong sex of their stag parties — they need all-male companionship as much as we women enjoy each other's company over a cup of tea. As far as I am concerned, the City Swiss Club may keep its "celibacy", and good luck to them. Only, of course, this limits their scope as far as *complete* representation of the Swiss Colony is concerned! No, if I had any critical opinion to voice at all, it would concern the scarcity of lectures. But I know that responsible Club members are already anxious enough to remedy the matter, for they remember the tremendous contribution the Club made to presenting Switzerland's position and strengthening her image in this country with first-rate lectures and entertaining prominent British personalities to serious discussion during the immediately after the war.

It is fortunate that my sympathies with the City Swiss Club are well known and have been ever since I was invited to my first social function in the London Swiss Colony 36 years ago. Otherwise my remarks might be misconstrued. It was the City Swiss Club Annual Banquet and Ball that my life here began, where I met my husband as a teenager fresh out of Helvetia.

It is not now the moment for me to go into the changes, favourable and otherwise, which I have witnessed following the fortunes of the Swiss community in general and the City Swiss Club in particular — all I agreed to deal with this time is the Summer Dance held on Friday, 28th June at Monkey Island Hotel at Bray-on-Thames. Before the war, these dances were formal affairs at the Brent Bridge Hotel Hendon — evening attire compulsory and several-course dinners, all at the cost of a few shillings a head. After the war, they were resumed as tea-dances and became informal affairs. The first venue was the "Compleat Angler" at Marlow and subsequently the Elizabethan Manor of Great Fosters near Egham. Last year, for the first time, the Dance was held on Monkey Island. The change was made because of some complaint regarding the food, but it seems to me that there is not all that difference now. Opinions differ as

to which place is preferable. For surroundings, the odds are even, and it all depends on the weather. For intimacy and picturesque riverside atmosphere, the U-shaped room at Monkey Island would be the better choice, but for general happy companionship for mixing with people before, during and after, and comfortable dancing, the Great Fosters Barn is hard to beat. Whatever one's feelings in the matter, there is no doubt that this year's "do" was a great success, except perhaps for the weather, and even that could have been worse. It would have been difficult to get more than the 129 people into the crowded room. Due to rain and wind, cocktails had to be served in three of four different places, which was a pity, for there was little chance of circulating. Dinner was very late, and dancing started almost at once. It was a very "young" party, a good omen for the future membership of the Club, and a number of sons and daughters of members, not least from amongst the committee, formed some kind of precious bridge between the past and the future. The Club's officers were headed by the President, Mr. Carl Nater, and thanks go to the organisers for their efforts to make members and visitors, not least the ladies, comfortable and happy. Dancing never flagged, and the floor, admittedly very small, was never empty. Candles burned down and were replaced, glasses emptied and re-filled, and many a happy memory of the past was exchanged. But it was no going back regretfully nor indeed looking wistfully to the future; it was full enjoyment of the present, and after all, the moment well spent makes a happy basis for a good future. Monkey Island 1968 was a good event, worth recording in the chronicles of the Club — with the ladies playing their part, please note!

MM

THE ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY ENTERTAINS

Swiss Parliamentary Delegation to visit London

On Monday, 22nd July, the Anglo-Swiss Society will receive a small Swiss Parliamentary Delegation consisting of the President of the National Council, Dr. Hans Conzett, National Councillors Pierre Freymond, Walter Hagmann, Anton Muheim, Edward Amstad and Councillor of States Werner Jauslin. A Cocktail Reception will be given at the Park Suite of the Dorchester Hotel from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. when the visitors who are coming at the invitation of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, will have a chance of meeting members and friends of the Anglo-Swiss Society.

Applications should be made to the Secretary, Anglo-Swiss Society, 77 Gloucester Place, W.1 (30/- a head).

The Reception will be preceded by the **Annual General Meeting** at 6 p.m. (same venue).

"SWISS OBSERVER" PUBLICATION DATES

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 26th July. We shall be glad to receive all articles and reports not later than Tuesday, 16th July. Short news items only can be accepted after that date.

Our next issue but one will be published on 9th August. Contributions for that number should be to hand not later than Tuesday, 30th July.